A

LETTER

FROM A

Traill to K

FATHER

TO HIS

Children;

Written by him in the Time of his Baniſhment:

To which is added, An Advice about ſome DUTIES.

Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of ſome Friends.

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Joseph Tasker.
Middleton Hall, Essex.

London.

To the READER.

Christian Reader,

BY this Letter you may easily form a Character of this good Man: He was a faithful Servant to his Master, and adhered to his Master's Cause and Interest, with undaunted Courage; as may appear by the many Imprisonments and Trials he endured, and at last a long and troublesom Banishment (a full Account of which you have in Mr. Wodrow's first Volume of the History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, Page 73, 146,) from all his near and dear Relations, and especially from his Wife and Children: But you see, his Love to them made him not in the least decline the Suffering of this Punishment (by pleading the Removal of this cruel Sentence) but submitted himself and Family to God's Providence; and although he is absent from them, yet has a great Concern for them; you may see his Concern for them is greater than for himself, as appears in the following Letter. He never forgets them, but has a weighty Concern for the Salvation of their Souls:

It was the Salvation of their Souls he had moſt at Heart, and not ſo much their Welfare in this World. It is a very good Example for every Chriſtian Parent to copy after; and if Parents were at more Pains with their Children, and more at the Throne of GOD's *Grace for them when young, they would reap more the Advantage of their Pains when they are old. You have, at the End of this Letter, a very good and ſeaſonable Advice about ſome Duties, written by his eldeſt Son Mr.* William, *who was Miniſter in* Borthwick, *at the Requeſt of a Lady, for her own Uſe; ſo, 'tis hoped, the publiſhing of it will do no Harm, but Good. It is begged of the Reader, that the little Eſcapes of Wording or Pointing may be paſſed over, ſeing it is a Fault very common to all poſthumous Works, ſuch as theſe are. That this may influence Parents to be more concerned about their own Souls, and the Souls of their Children; and that Children may be ſtirred up by this to follow much of their Parents Counſels, is the earneſt Deſire of thy Soul's Well-wiſher.* Farewel.

A

LETTER from a Father, to his Children, &c.

[Rotterdam, March 1665.]

Dear Children, whom the Lord my God has graciously given me,

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be to you, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have often, in this Time of my Exile, had many earnest Wishes for your eternal Salvation, and some weak Prayers to the Hearer of Prayer, for all of you, That ye may be saved from the Wrath to come, and may, in the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ, be owned of him, set on his right Hand, and taken

in to dwell with him for ever; That ye may be of the bleſſed Number of theſe, of whom he will be admir'd, and in whom he ſhall be glorified; *In that Day, when he ſhall come in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9 and 10 *Ver.* And that poor, wretched, unprofitable I, may have to ſay in that Day, *Behold me, and the Children thou haſt given me*, which were for a while for Signs and Wonders in the World, and now are for Signs and Wonders of thy rich Mercy, and free undeſerved Grace. The Lord hath often put it into my Heart, to write unto you all, in one Letter, that I may ſtir you up unto the ſerious and frequent Thoughts of that which is of your greateſt Concernment, even your eternal Salvation; that ye may make that your main Task, *to work out your Salvation in Fear and Trembling*; and, for that End, *to give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure: For if ye do theſe Things, ye ſhall never fall; but an Entrance ſhall be adminiſtred to you abundantly, into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. There are Three Things mainly that have made me thus to write unto you, *Firſt*, Becauſe this is a Duty lies upon Chriſtian

ſtian Parents. The Lord did ſhew unto *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, That he expected this at his Hand, in Reference to his Relations, *Gen.* xviii. 19. *For I know that he will command his Children and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord*, &c. And the Spirit of God, in the New Teſtament, does much preſs this Duty. 2*dly*, Becauſe my Obligations to Chriſt, and to his free Grace, are ſo many, and ſo great, that, had I never ſo many Children, I would think my ſelf bound, to the utmoſt of my Power, to conſecrate them all to him; and to preſs upon them, by all that Love could ſuggeſt unto me, That they would ſerve the Lord God of their Father. 3*dly*, Becauſe, among the many other Challenges I have now in my ſolitary Hours, in this Houſe of my Pilgrimage, for Neglect of Duties in my Days of Peace, this is one, That I did not improve my Time aright, *when the Candle of the Lord did ſhine upon my Tabernacle*, and ye were as Olive Plants about my Table. Alas! I did not preſs upon you, as I ought and might, the ſerious Thoughts of Eternity, and of your Souls Salvation; and therefore I am the more obliged now to do it, at this Diſtance: And who knows but it may ſink deeper into your Hearts, that it comes thus by a Letter from an aged, ba-

nished Father? I remember that I was often moved, in Prayer with that Family over which the Lord had set me, to pray for Preparation against a Time of Scattering, though I did not then think that it should have been such, and so far off, before Death; but now it is come, and that which Death will make is following: The Lord give us the sanctified Use of the one, and serious Preparation for the other. 4*thly*, Because I am under the Bond of a Promise and Vow to the most high God, taken on, before him, and unto him, at your Baptism, That I should endeavour to train you up for himself, that ye might learn to know, fear, and serve him. I remember, I presented every one of you to that Sacrament, except one, who was presented, in my Absence, by a faithful and worthy Minister, who is now at his Rest, and who doubtless did pray for the Blessing and Fruit of that Ordinance unto the Child he did present: And, I hope, his Prayer was heard; and that the Lord, who has chosen for her a good Husband, and made her the Mother of Children, shall own her as one of the Daughters of *Zion*, who shall be found in the Register of these of whom it is written, They were born there, by the new and better Birth. Yea, the Lord has been graciously pleased to let me live so long with you,

you, till I have entred all of you (except the Youngeſt, who, I hope, ſhall not want his Part of the Covenant Bleſſing) unto that other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that ſo you might therein, by your own proper Fact and Deed, make an open and avowed Reſignation of your ſelves to the Lord, *as your God, and your Father's God*, and declare before the World, That in him alone ye have Salvation, and that ye will live and die to him; and ſo might perform what was promiſed for you by your Parents, in that firſt Sacrament, when ye could not reſtipulate by your ſelves, but behoved to do it by another, till ye ſhould come to the Years of Knowledge, that ye might then give your own actual and formal Conſent; which, I hope, ye have done, as often as ye have been Partakers of that other Sacrament. 5*thly*, Becauſe the Lord has made me, again and again, in this my *Patmos*, to cry unto him, more than ever before, for Grace and Glory to my ſelf, and to my Seed; and to lay out before him that ſweet and large Promiſe, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayſt live.* Yea, now and then, to act Faith, and praying upon it, and to win unto ſome Hopes that it ſhall be made

good

good for all of you. Sure I am, there is Room enough for all of you in Heaven, were ye more than ye are: There is Mercy and Grace enough in Jesus Christ, to bring you thither; and nothing can keep you out, but Unwillingness to enter in by him, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; and who makes it one of his greatest Complaints against perishing Sinners, That they *will not come unto him, that they may have Life.* And the *Sixth* and last Thing, that hath moved me to scribble these Lines, is, That the few and evil Days of my Pilgrimage are fast wearing to an End, the Shadows of the Evening are stretched out, and my Sun is near the setting, neither know I, if I shall see you any more in a present World; and therefore, while the Lord lets me yet dwell in this frail Tabernacle, I would desire to mind you of these Things which concern your eternal Peace. And that ye may remember these Things, when I shall be no more within Time, either to speak or write to you: Now all that I shall recommend to you, I shall sum up into thir few Heads, *First*, and chiefly, There are some Things I would press upon you, in Reference to your seeking the Lord, and serving him in your Generations, *that ye may be saved in the Day of the Lord.* *Secondly*, Some Things in Reference to your na-

natural Relations. *Thirdly*, Some Things in Reference to the Times wherein the Lord has caſt your Lot to live.

(1.) For the *Firſt*, Make it your daily Task, to ſeek the Lord and his Face, and to ſerve him with all your Heart, as your God, and your Father's God: And O that you and I could exalt him; and that he would prepare for himſelf an Habitation in my Heart, and in the Heart of every one of you! Read the Scriptures frequently and ſeriouſly; meditate upon them, and pray upon them, *Firſt*, For Grace to obey the Precepts there ſet down, for you. *Secondly*, For Hearts to tremble at the Threatnings that ſound there, that ye may eſcape the Dint of them, and may, by your flying in to Chriſt, be kept from the fearful Execution of them, which will certainly paſs upon all the Children of Diſobedience. *Thirdly*, Pray for Faith to believe all the great and precious Promiſes that are breathed out there, *That ye may by theſe be made Partakers of the divine Nature, having eſcaped the Corruption that is the World through Luſt*, 2 Pet. i. 4. *And that having theſe Promiſes*, ye may by them (both as Motives to perſwade, and as Means to help and enable you) *puriſie your ſelves from all Filthineſs, both of the Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *And that ye may be*

Heirs

Heirs of these exceeding great and precious Promises, through Jesus Christ, in whom they are all Yea and Amen. Fourthly, Pray for Wisdom to look aright upon, and consider the Examples of the Saints, recorded in Scripture, both in their Failings and Falls; that ye may be brought to ply your Course circumspectly, and with Fear, eschewing these: For they are set up as Beacons, to warn these that sail through the same Sea, to beware of the Rocks on which they did strike, and suffered Loss, tho' they were saved from drowning, by the Skill and Care of their blessed Pilot, who brought them in at last, as Shipbroken Passengers, to their safe and quiet Haven. And also in their Virtues, and holy Walking before the Lord, in their Generations; *That ye may in these be Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises*, Heb. vi. 12. *And that, being compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, ye may lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily beset you, and may run with Patience the Race that is set before you*, Heb. xii. 1. And as I do recommend unto you frequent and fervent Prayer, so I would have you not to forget, or neglect Praising, I mean, singing of Psalms, even in your secret Worship; but remember to *sing with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also*: This is one main Part of our im-

immediate Worſhip, and ſhall continue thro' all Eternity, when all mediate Worſhip ſhall ceaſe. Ye may perform this ſweet Part of Worſhip, even in Secret, without letting your Voice be heard by others, who poſſibly may be in Places, or Rooms near you: And then, when you have been at the Throne, and have preſented your ſelves and your Supplications unto him who ſits thereon, then look up, and expect your Anſwer from the Hearer of Prayer, and through his Merits and Mediation who has a *Cenſer, and much Incenſe is given to him, that he may offer it with* (or, as it may be read, that he may give or add it to) *the Prayers of all Saints*, Rev. viii. 3. But, while ye wait for an Anſwer, and look up, do not ſet a Time to him; *for ſure he will make the Viſion to ſpeak*, and the Promiſe, on which ye pray, to be fulfilled in the due and beſt Time: And therefore wait for it, even when ye think it tarrieth long; for ye have his Word for it, *That it ſhall come, and ſhall not tarry*, Hab. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. And though ye cannot be always on your Knees in Prayer, neither is this required of you; yet know, there is a Way to entertain Communion and Fellowſhip with God all the Day long, and to give him the conſtant Service of the Affections of your Hearts, and to be ſending and darting up frequent Ejaculations unto him,

into

into whatever Company you be, whatever ye be looking on, and ſpeaking of. We know how it was with honeſt *Nehemiah*, Chap. 2. ver. 4. *Then the King ſaid unto me, For what doſt thou make Requeſt? So I prayed to the God of Heaven.* This were to *ſet the Lord always before your Eyes*; this were to *walk God*, and to be *in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long*; and ſo, when Death ſhould come, ye ſhould but change your Place, not your beſt Company.

(2.) That which I would recommend to you, in Reference to your natural Relations, is, *Firſt*, In Reference to your Mother: I charge you be kind to her, now when ſhe is come to her old Age; and be helpful and comfortable unto her, as the Lord ſhall enable. Probably ſhe will live longer with you than I ſhall; and I pray the Lord that it may be ſo. She hath been a kind and dutiful Wife unto me, and comfortable to me in the Time of my Sufferings; and the Lord will bleſs her, even for that. She has been a very tender and dutiful Mother to all of you: In her Womb were you conceived, and in Pains did ſhe bring you forth into the World, and nouriſhed you on her Breaſts; and, ſince that Time to this, her Care towards you has been very tender and great; and the Lord both craves and expects a kind Re-

Requital. 2*dly*, In Reference to your ſelves, as Brethren and Sifters brought up in one Family, though now ſcattered; O love one another in the Lord, *and fall not out by the Way*; but be helpful one to another, eſpecially as to your Souls Concerns. Pray one for another, and, as Occaſion offers, one with another: And ye, who are elder, have a Care to beſtow a Word of Admonition upon the younger; eſpecially forget not your younger Brother: Ye, who are his elder Brethren, give him Warning to beware of the Evils of the Time wherein his Lot is caſt, and of the ſinful City he lives in; but, above all, to beware of the Evils of his own Heart. Recommend unto him that Scripture (which I hope ye recommend to your ſelves, *Pſal.* cxix. 9. *Wherewith ſhall a young Man cleanſe his Way? but by taking heed thereto according to thy Word.* Eccl. xii. 1. *Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.* He bears the Name of his Grandfather, who was no Scholar, and yet a Man well acquainted with God, and much exerciſed in the Scriptures; and in Prayer, and on Chriſt's Side, in the Controverſies of *Zion*, under the former Prelates, he would never countenance any of them, albeit he had natural Relations to ſome of them: He did, towards his End, give Teſtimony againſt the Uſurpation uſed

by

by these Men, upon the Congregation where he lived, and whereof he was an Elder: And so after, and, through manifold Temptations and Afflictions, he entred into the Kingdom of God, and died in the assured Hope of the blessed Days of Reformation, which we should see, and which we did see. But alas! our Unthankfulness for these Days, and our many Provocations against the Lord, have brought a sad Change. The Lord grant, That, as that young Man bears his Name, so he may learn to live and walk in the good old Way wherein he walked, that he may find Rest to his Soul.

(3.) There are some Things I would recommend to you, in Reference to the present Times into which your Lot is cast to live. And, *First*, Beg of the Lord Wisdom to discern the Times, and to know *what Israel ought to do.* 2*dly*, Keep your selves from the Evils of the Times; for they are evil Days wherein even the Elect are in Danger of being deceived: *Have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but to reprove them rather*, Eph. v. 11. *And beware lest ye also be led away with the Errors of the Wicked, and so fall from your own Stedfastness: But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18. Pray to be kept from the Way of those who

who are turned aside from the good old Way, wherein some Time they walked; and wherein they promised to themselves, and avowed and professed before others, that they should find Rest to their Souls: Yea, and some preached this before many Witnesses; but now they seek their Rest in other Paths, which the Lord has cursed, and which he will yet again curse. Be not Sharers with these Men in their Sins, that ye may not partake of their Judgments; for their Judgment sleepeth not, but is as fast hastning, as they are ripening for it, and that is fast enough. 3*dly*, Labour to be marked among the Mourners in *Jerusalem*, *who sigh and cry for all the Abominations that are done in the Midst thereof*, Ezek. ix. 4. O beware of being reckoned in the Number of those who eat and drink, *and are not grieved for the Afflictions of* Joseph; or of those who make merry in their sensual Delights, in a Day and Time when the Lord is *calling to Mourning, and Weeping, and Fasting*; against whom a Wo is denounced, *And whose Iniquities shall not be purged away till they die.* Amos vi. 1. *Wo to them that are at Ease in* Zion. And *Isa.* xxii. 12, 13, 14. *And in that Day did the Lord God of Hosts call to Weeping and to Mourning, and to Baldness, and to girding with Sackcloth: And behold, Joy and Gladness,*

slaying of Oxen, and killing Sheep, eating Flesh, and drinking Wine; let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine Ears by the Lord of Hosts, Surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts. Mourn for the Blood of the blessed Martyrs, that has been shed in that great, but sinful City; and bless the Lord, who gave to those faithful and valiant Witnesses to offer their Blood so willingly, for sealing these sure Truths, that are now opposed by a gainsaying Generation; and for asserting the Royal Prerogative of *Zion*'s King, who will take no Laws of dying Kings, whose Breath soon goes out, and in that Hour all their Thoughts perish with them. Let the Two precious Heads, that are set on the *Netherbow*, but shall be seen in the great Day, with Crowns upon them; yea, their Adversaries must see them, amongst these whom the King will honour: Let, I say, the Heads of these faithful Witnesses *(who, being dead, yet speaketh)* mind you, and stir you up to cry, as the Souls under the Altar do, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge the Blood of thy Servants on them that dwell on the Earth?* Rev. vi. 10.

(4.) I would recommend unto you, my Two eldest Sons, who were entring upon your Trials, for the Preaching of the Gospel, when

when the Storm aroſe which razed Presbyteries, (but their Foundation cannot be razed, *for it is built upon the Rock of Ages, againſt which the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail.*) Let not this Storm ſhake you, or make you quit your Purpoſe. Ye were minting to fit your ſelves for putting your Hand to that Plough, when the Lord ſhould give a Call; and therefore look not back, but purſue your Purpoſe: And, by the Lord's Grace, and his Strength, be diligent in the Uſe of all Means, whereby ye may be fitted for that high and holy Calling; and poſſibly the Lord of the Vineyard ſhall call you, among others, to work in his Vineyard in that poor Land, when he ſhall have driven out theſe wild Boars, which have laid it waſte for a while. The Lord knows, that, as it would be a great Part of my Joy, to ſee all my Children walking in the Truth; ſo would it be ſome further Degree of my Joy, to ſee you Two honoured of the Lord, to be Preachers of the Truth, I mean, faithful, and not Time-ſerving Preachers, entring by the Door, and not climbing up ſome other Way. The Lord can do it, and, if he ſee it fit for his own Glory, he will do it; and on theſe Terms allenarly do I, and ſhould ye ſeek it. *Laſtly*, I would recommend to all of you, both Sons and Daughters, and that,

in this backſliding Time, *when ſo many are turning back from Chriſt, and walking no more with him*, ye would ſtrengthen your Reſolution not to leave him; for *to whom ſhould ye go, in turning away from him, ſeing he only has the Words of eternal Life?* John vi. 66,67,68. *From that Time many of his Diſciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then ſaid* Jeſus *unto the Twelve, Will ye alſo go away? Then ſaid* Simon Peter *unto him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? for thou haſt the Words of eternal Life? Say ye not, A Confederacy to all thoſe to whom this apoſtate Generation ſay, A Confederacy; neither fear ye their Fear, nor be afraid: But ſanctifie the Lord God of Hoſts in your Hearts, and let him be your Fear and your Dread,* Iſa. viii. 12, 13. The Lord himſelf ſpeak in this to your Hearts and mine, with a ſtrong Hand, inſtructing us. Now, I conceive, that this would much conduce to help you to Stedfaſtneſs in a backſliding Time, often to make actual Reſignation of your ſelves to the Lord, I mean, on your Knees in Prayer; humble and hearty Prayer, to give up your ſelves, Souls and Bodies, to him, who is your Lord, Creator and Redeemer, who has bought you by a dear Price, that ye ſhould be his, *and that ye ſhould live to him, and not to your ſelves.* This actual reſigning your

your ſelves to him, and explicit and formal covenanting with him, would pleaſe him well, would give the Devil and your own Corruptions a great Daſh, and would make you underſtand ſome Scriptures more clearly and more comfortably; as *Pſal.* xvi. 2. *O my Soul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: My Goodneſs extendeth not to thee.* Pſal. xxvii. 8. *When thou ſaidſt, Seek ye my Face; my Heart ſaid unto thee, Thy Face, Lord, will I ſeek.* Jer. xxx. 21, 22. *And their Nobles ſhall be of themſelves, and their Governor ſhall proceed from the Midſt of them, and I will cauſe him to draw near, and he ſhall approach unto me: For who is this that engaged his Heart to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord? And ye ſhall be my People, and I will be your God.* Zech. xiii. 9. *They ſhall call on my Name, and I will hear them: I will ſay, It is my People; and they ſhall ſay, The Lord is my God.* But of this, worthy and ſtedfaſt Mr. *William Guthrie* has written well; which little great Book I recommend to all of you. And now, my dear Children, whoſe everlaſting Salvation my Soul prays for, and deſires to believe; and whoſe holy and Chriſtian Converſation, in the Way thither, I earneſtly beg; meditate often on that Scripture, *Titus* ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *For the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to*

all Men; Teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World; Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. And pray for Grace to obey that great and excellent Gospel Lesson, *That ye may assure your Hearts before him, and that it may be well with you in the great Day of the Lord.* And, shall I mention to you, what worthy Mr. *Bolton* said, on his Death-bed, to his Children? (I hope, the mentioning of it shall do you no Harm, but Good) *I charge you*, said he, *O my Children, not to meet me in the great Day, in a Christless, graceless Condition!* I hope, every one of you will endeavour, and make it your main Study and Care, to be found in Christ in that Day, *Not having your own Righteousness, but that which is through Faith in him.* The Lord himself grant it may be so; *And the Lord God, my God, and my Father's God, who has fed me, and provided for me all my Life long until this Day, and the great Angel of the Covenant, which redeem'd me from all Evil, bless the Lads, and Lasses also:* And so I recommend you to him, as your God all-sufficient; *And to the Word of his*

Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them that are ſanctified through Faith that is in him. And now the very God of Peace ſanctifie you wholly: And I pray God, *That your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, be preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Faithful is he who calleth you, who alſo will do it.* Children, pray for me, your aged Father, who deſires to live and die in the Hope, That we ſhall, with Joy, meet before the Throne; and that ye take thir Lines, as ſome weak Help to carry you thither. They are from

Your loving and affectionate Father,

ROBERT TRAILL.

P. S. I would deſire, That ye would chooſe ſome convenient Day, when all of you may meet together, and have this read amongſt you, with earneſt Prayer to God for his Bleſſing upon it, and for Mercy and Grace to him who wrote it, and is now at ſuch a Diſtance from you; and then let every one of you have a Copy of it, to keep beſide you, as the beſt Love-token I can ſend you. *Grace, Grace, rich and free Grace*

be the Portion of every one of you; and then are ye rich enough. Let me have an Answer from you, subscribed by all your Hands, that I may know how you accept of this Counsel, and what your Purpose is of hearkning unto it, and following it in the Lord's Strength; and I shall carefully keep it by me, and shall present it before the Lord, by Prayer to him, who must work in you both to will and to do of his good Pleasure, that he may give you to work out your Salvation in Fear and Trembling.

A neceſſary and excellent

ADVICE,

ABOUT SOME

DUTIES, &c.

I. *As to Worſhip.*

(1.) FREQUENCY in Eſſays of Worſhip and Duty, ſeems to be more uſeful and edifying, than the lengthning out of theſe Duties, or ſpending much Time at once in any of them, except upon extraordinary Caſes and Occaſions; and Frequency in theſe Duties comes alſo neareſt the Scripture Rule, and Scripture Precept, *Pſal.* lv. 17. *Evening and Morning, and*

and at Noon, will I praiſe, and cry aloud. Pſal. cxix. 164. where the Pſalmiſt is found to pray Seven Times a Day; and it is to be ſuppoſed, That Chriſtians who are much alone, and whoſe Time and Affairs permit, do uſually pray much oftner than Seven Times a Day. When you get an Hour or Two for ſecret Duties, it is better to pray Three or Four Times during that Space, than to ſpend it all in one Addreſs, without Intermiſſion, or intermixing of other Duties with it.

(2.) In Secret, let Reading, eſpecially of the Scriptures, and Meditation, be intermixed with your Eſſays of Prayer.

(3.) In Secret, make Uſe of your Voice ſo high, and low, as you find, by Experience, doth moſt conduce to the Help and Furtherance of Serioufneſs, Fervency, Livelineſs, Attention, and Fixedneſs of Heart and Mind, in Oppoſition to vain, wandring Thoughts and Impertinencies.

(4.) Secrecy, and preventing your being overheard, and the Shew and Appearance of Oſtentation.

(5.) Re-

(5.) Reverence the ſovereign, unſearchable, holy, and wiſe Providence of God, in granting you Liberty to pray, ſometimes for one Thing, ſometimes for another, and ſometimes, it may be for a long Time, not granting you Liberty to pray for that ſame Thing that you would faineſt be at: For we cannot, when we pleaſe, command Liberty in Prayer; nor have we any Power over our ſelves, to ſeek ſpiritually and fervently, even that which we would fain have, *Rom.* vii. And this may let us ſee a vaſt Difference between natural, ſpiritual, and gracious Deſires after the ſame Thing.

(6.) Stumble not, nor entertain harſh Thoughts of God, if you get Liberty in Prayer for a Thing, with Faith, Fervency and Submiſſion, and yet be denied that Thing, which you were helped more than ordinary to ſeek; for theſe Prayers are heard and accepted, tho' the Thing be not granted. So it was with Chriſt himſelf, *Heb.* ii. 9. *Matth.* xxvi. 39. *O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me; Nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

(7.) When ye cannot get Liberty to pray for your ſelves, nor for others, nor for the publick and general Concerns of the Goſpel

ſpel and People of God, nor for any Thing; then try Confeſſion of Sin, and renewing of Repentance; try Thankſgiving and Praiſes for what you have got of late and of old, and for the many good Things you preſently poſſeſs, and for what ſpiritual Bleſſings you enjoy beyond many about you, and for what Liberty you have had at any Time formerly. Praiſe and Thankſgiving ſometimes prove a Mean of Enlargement, and looſing of Bonds. Alſo obſerve, improve, and take hold of providential Calls, and Seaſons of ſecret Prayer, beſides your ordinary Times for it, ſuch as thoſe; Immediately after Prayer with others, either in Publick or in Private, then go to your Cloſet, if Opportunity be given: Alſo, when you are in any Commotion, or Diſturbance of Paſſion, through ſudden Anger, Fear, Grief, or Joy, unexpected or ſurprizing Accident, Croſſes, &c. then eſſay to compoſe your Heart, by venting it to God, and breathing out to him in Prayer. Likewiſe, after the Commiſſion or firſt Diſcovery of ſome freſh Sin and Guilt; again, immediately before you enter upon any Buſineſs of Weight or Moment; likewiſe, all your Duties of Worſhip are to be begun and cloſed with ſecret Prayer. Again, when ye get any Liberty, or Looſing of Heart, bleſs and praiſe him for it, both before you

leave

leave the Duty, and alſo when you make your next Addreſs to him, for what you got when you were laſt before him. Again, tho' you get neither ſenſible Acceſs, nor deſirable Returns of Prayer; yet you ought to be encouraged in the Faith of that great Truth, *That he hath not bidden the Seed of* Jacob *ſeek his Face in vain*, Iſa. xlv. 19. And if 'tis ill with you, as it is, you may be ſure it would be much worſe with you, if Duties of Worſhip were ſlighted.

II. *As to your Caſe and Frame.*

(1.) LAbour to get out of your Soul's Trouble, not ſo much becauſe it is terrible to you, as becauſe it is ſinful, and oppoſite to Faith, and almoſt all other Duties, *John* xiv. 1. *Let not your Hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Yet it muſt be granted, That it is the uſual Spot of the Children of God; and that it is a more kindly and hopeful Token, to have a little too much of this, than to have nothing of it at all, *Pſal.* lxxiii. 14. *All the Day long have I been plagued, and chaſtned every Morning,*

ning. Pſal. lv. 5. Labour for much Eſtabliſhment of the Heart by Grace; and for an equal, conſtant Frame of Spirit, that you may not be ſoon caſt down, nor raſhly frighted with every unexpected Thing, and often put out of Frame, and have ſo many Ups and Downs, like the Legs of the Lame, *Prov.* xxvi. 7. *The Legs of the Lame are not equal.* Heb. xiii. 9. *It is a good Thing that the Heart be eſtabliſhed by Grace:* And many other Places. Labour much for *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price,* 1 Pet. iii. 4. and alſo very ſavoury to our Neighbours. And alſo, guard againſt all Paſſion, either ſpeaking or doing any Thing in your Haſte; and eſpecially againſt the ſudden venting of your Paſſion: If at any Time you be overtaken with it, do but think a while upon the Thing that vexes you, before you tell your Mind about it; and when at length you muſt ſpeak, yet, even then, ſpeak leſs than you think; ſpeak not all the worſt of it, for that would but inflame the Heart more than it was before, *Prov.* xxix. 11. *A Fool uttereth all his Mind; but a wiſe Man keepeth it in till afterwards.* Prov. xvi. 23. *The Heart of the Wiſe teacheth his Mouth, and addeth Learning to his Lips.* Learn to put a favourable and hopeful Conſtruction upon the Providences of God towards

wards you, and even upon thoſe that are dark, ſad, and diſmal-like; and do not carry like one that is jealous of his Kindneſs; and do not think, That, in every croſs Diſpenſation, he is ſeeking Advantage of you, and, as it were, laying a Snare for you; but rather, if a Diſpenſation be liable to Tentation, and different Conſtructions, whereof Nine are bad, and but one of them good, let the praying Believer reject and leave the Nine bad Interpretations, and put only the good and favourable Senſe upon that ſad Diſpenſation: For it well becomes him, and it is his Duty and Wiſdom ſo to do; and, with the Scripture Warrant, *Mark* vii. and laſt, *He hath done all Things well.* Rom. viii. 28. *And we know that all Things work together for Good, to them that love God.* Pſal. xxv. 10. *All the Paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth,* &c. and in many other Places. Again, in the Trial of your Caſe, and Sincerity of your Faith, Love, and of the reſt of the Graces; I ſay, in the Examination of them before God, mind the Differences mentioned between the Marks of ſtrong Faith, and the Marks of true Faith, tho' weak.

(2.) Often

(2.) Often and ſeriouſly put your Heart in his Hand, and pray, That he would not ſuffer you to provoke him, nor deceive your ſelf, in your Trial, and judging of your Caſe, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 23. *Search me, O God, and know my Heart.* And *Pſal.* xxvi. 1. *Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine Integrity.*

(3.) When the Trial proves dark and difficult, and ye know not what to think of your Caſe, being ſo confuſed; Then put off intricate Queſtions about your Sincerity in former Times, and ſet about the direct Acts of Faith, which ſtand in the Outgoings of the Soul towards Jeſus Chriſt, and chooſing and cleaving to him, as a full, ſufficient, and only Saviour of poor loſt Sinners; which ſuppoſes an Heart-humbling and exerciſing Senſe and Feeling of our Sinfulneſs and Miſery.

(4.) Beg that promiſed Spirit, 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. *Now have we received not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given us of God.* Lay your Account with many Ups and Downs in the Caſe; for they are uſeful, needful, profitable, and kindly to Saints, in their Voyage to the Land of Reſt: And

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we cannot well bear constant fair Weather, but must sometimes have Storms and cross Winds, and sometimes Gales of favourable and fair Winds; and all is made *through Prayer, and Supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus*, Philip. i. 19. to contribute for the Furtherance of their Voyage heaven-ward, and giving them more and fresh Discoveries of the working of sanctifying and saving Grace in the Hearts of his People, and Soul-refreshing Exercises, that are suitable for a militant Christian in this World.

III. *As to Practices of Duty.*

(1.) OFten mind what is your daily Cross, *Heb.* xii. 2. that you may take it up, and follow Christ, bearing it, and from Time to Time taking a fresh List of it.

(2.) Desiring and endeavouring to do all in Faith, depending upon God in Christ (*Leaning upon him, while ye walk through the Wilderness of this World*, Cant. viii. 5. for

Furniture and Through-bearing in all the Cases you can be in.

(3.) For Acceptance of you and your Essays of Duty, of Success of Duty, and Growth therein, of Holiness, and Nearness to God thereby.

(4.) Of a Reward and Blessing, that it shall not be in vain, *Isa.* xlv. 19. *I said not unto the Seed of* Jacob, *Seek ye me in vain.* 1 Tim. iv. 8. *Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having the Promises of the Life to come, and that which is now.* Also, you must be pressing foreward daily, to know more of the Power, Life, and Spirit of every Duty, and still to be going on from Strength to Strength; unto which Progress, the wise Observation of our Short-comings doth daily help.

(5.) Keep your Eye much upon your Predominants, and upon the *Sin that doth most easily beset and overthrow you*; for these may be the Captain of your Soul's Enemies. More particularly, enquire whether any of these prevail over you, *viz.* Doubting, Misbelief, and calling almost all Truths to Question. 2*dly*, God-provoking and self-disquieting Jealousy of his Love to you, notwithstand-

ſtanding of his multiplied Evidences of the Care of your Soul. 3*dly*, Tormenting Diffidence, impatient Haſte, raſh Cenſuring of others, and haſty venting of your Thoughts when you are vexed: It is better to vent your Heart to God in Prayer, which is the Breathing of the Soul; and then, as you ſee fit, to vent your ſelf to your Fellow-creatures. 4*thly*, Mind the proper Seaſon for every Duty; and learn daily more of that great Duty of redeeming Time, *Eph.* v. 16. *Redeeming the Time, becauſe the Days are evil.* 5*thly*, Whatever you think Chriſt would have done, in ſuch a particular Caſe, when he was upon Earth, do you the ſame. This may be a Direction in very dark and doubtful Caſes, and it is commanded in the imitating of Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* i. 15. *But as he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all Manner of Converſation.* 1 John iv. 17. *Becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this World.* 1 Cor. xii. 11. *But all theſe worketh that one and the ſame Spirit, dividing to every Man ſeverally,* as he will. Mind that general Rule, *Matth.* vii. 12. *Therefore all Things whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them,* &c. with its due Limitations.

(6.) Learn to keep in Mind your latter End; and be dying daily, by conſtant Eſſays of that Precept, 1 *Tim.* vi. 19. *Laying up in Store for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life*; by Diligence in the great Duty of Chriſtianity, by labouring to grow daily in Grace; and adventure on nothing but what is Duty, both lawful and ſeaſonable, and as you think you would adventure upon, if you had but a Day to live. Improve your Senſe of Short-coming, not for diſcouraging you from or in Duties, but for ſtirring you up to more Diligence and Watchfulneſs.

IV. *As*

IV. *As to your Converſe with others.*

(1.) MInd what was formerly hinted, of ſpeaking within Bounds; which ſeems to be the Scripture Rule, *Prov.* xvii. 27. *He that hath Knowledge, ſpareth his Words*, &c. and many other Places.

(2.) Study to be both doing Good, and getting Good, in every Company; let all be for Edification, otherwiſe you will be getting Hurt, or at leaſt loſing your Time, and falling behind in your great Work.

(3.) Let your Viſits be moſt to the Godly, *Prov.* xiii. 20. *He that walketh with wiſe Men, ſhall be made wiſe*, &c. Yet not only to thoſe, *Prov.* xviii. 24. *A Man that hath Friends, muſt ſhew himſelf friendly*, &c. 1 *Cor.* v. 10. *Yet not altogether with the Fornicators of this World*, &c.

(4.) When you give any Viſit, make it ſhort, except the Company be very good, and their Diſcourſe edifying.

(5.) When

(5.) When you receive a Visit, rather lead the Discourse, by proposing some pertinent Purpose, than to lose the Time, by idle, vain, and unprofitable Converse; and the more serious and spiritual your Discourse be, you will be the sooner quit of their Company, if they be carnal, and they will the seldomer return to trouble you: Yet be not behind the worst of them in common Civility, and neighbouring kind Offices.

(6.) Let the Discourse be led, by talking of remarkable Providences, or Questions suitable to the Company you converse with. There are many innocent Wiles of shortning unprofitable Company; in the Use whereof, Prudence is needful, and Wisdom is profitable to direct; so there is need of Watchfulness and Resolution, to make them effectual with little Observation.

At *Berthwick*, *December* 12. 1708.

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FINIS.